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Altai – Sayan Ecoregion Issue #20

WWF Russia
WWF Mongolia

Snow Leopard Conservation in Russia - WWF experience in protection of the endangered wild cat

Snow Leopard Conservation in Russia published in June in Russian and English reviews current situation with this wild cat in the most northern part of its range and considers potential actions for the long-term conservation of this endangered species and its habitats in Russia.

Field data on snow leopard populations published in this book were collected in 2000-2011 in the framework of WWF and UNDP/GEF programs in the Russian part of Altai-Sayan Ecoregion. The publication represents necessary data for the new National Strategy for Snow Leopard Conservation in Russia (2012-2022).

In 2002 the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation approved the Strategy for Snow Leopard Conservation in Russia 2002-2010. This document was based on relatively limited Russian expertise in the field of research and conservation of snow leopards.

As a result of that Strategy's implementation over the course of 2002-2011, the distributions and numbers of key Russian populations of the species residing in Altai and Tuva Republics and southern Krasnoyarsk Krai were identified. Snow Leopard Monitoring Program in Russia (2009) was developed and published with support from UNDP/GEF and WWF. Modern methods of snow leopard monitoring such as camera-trapping and DNA analysis were introduced for the research of key snow leopard populations. Anti-poaching activities were aimed primarily at fighting illegal snare-trapping in snow leopard habitats. Five new protected areas in snow leopard habitat were established in Altai, Tuva and Khakasia. Successful projects to reduce conflicts between snow leopards and herders in western Tuva were implemented. Small business development is underway, focusing mainly on ecotourism and rural tourism to

employ local residents living in snow leopard habitat as an alternative to poaching. Collaborative efforts between Russia and Mongolia were started to study and protect transboundary populations of the species. As a result of these and other activities key snow leopard populations in Russia are, kept at stable level and even increased slightly in southwestern Tuva.

That Strategy of 2002 estimated the Russian snow leopard population at approximately 150-200 animals. However further research conducted in snow leopard habitat between 2003-2011 showed that the true population of the species in Russia is only half as large, possibly even smaller.

Thanks to more precise data on the location and numbers of snow leopards in Russia, significantly increased experience in protecting this species and changes in socio-economic conditions in Russia, there is a need today for a new edition of the Strategy for Snow Leopard Conservation in our country.

The publication contains materials needed to prepare a Russian Snow Leopard Conservation Strategy and is intended for use by the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources to develop comprehensive priority conservation measures to protect this species. [Russia](#)

The English version of "Snow leopard Conservation in Russia" is available at: <http://www.wwf.ru/resources/publ/book/eng/599>

Fresh Water

Boguchanskaya Hydropower Plant (HPP) in Krasnoyarsky Krai (Russia) is being constructed without ecological expertise



The banks of the Angara River are being covered with water



May, 2012. Filling of water reservoir is started

Boguchanskaya Hydropower Plant (HPP) is a part of an ambitious development project that includes constructing an aluminum plant, a cellulose plant and the HPP in the north of Krasnoyarsky Krai.

Unfortunately this project does not include any environment and biodiversity conservation activities to mitigate its impact on fragile environment of northern forests. Despite the project was opposed by the coalition of conservation organizations the owners of Boguchanskaya HPP and the regional government do not plan to conduct the official ecological expertise of the project. The fragile and unique boreal ecosystems of Angara River valley are threatened by such rapid and intense industrial resource exploitation. The experts claim that 1 mln cubic meters of wood will come to the water surface in the first year as a result of the bad forest removal. About 150 thousand ha of land (including 30 thousand ha of farmland and the area of two refuges) will be flooded. Moreover this year an unexpected filling of water reservoir was started by HPP's owners which already caused the problems for river transport workers and timber rafters due to the low water level of the Yenisey river.

*“Rusal and RusHydro Companies implementing a joint project of Boguchanskaya HPP construction on the Angara River does not comply with key international standards, and, moreover, violates the Russian legislation. The developers refused to discuss issues concerning HPP”, says **Alexei Knizhnikov, head of environmental policy projects of WWF Russia.***

In 2010 as a result of WWF campaign more than thirty thousand citizens of Russia signed the petition to the owners of HPP and regional government with demands to Rusal and RusHydro to follow the legislation and ensure the ecosystems security and diminish the ecological impact.

As an active player of meetings and information campaign WWF claims that the bottom of the future reservoir for HPP has to be totally cleared of wood and a new protected area has to be established in the region to compensate the ecosystem damage. Above all Boguchanskaya HPP should undergo the official ecological expertise.

Russia



Water meters are being installed at all organizations, business entities, and households in the town

Drinking, household and industrial water consumption of Khovd town population, organizations, and business entities is supplied from a ground water source. However, ground water resource is the natural resource that is re-stored over extremely long time. Thus, a priority has been given to creating more applicable legal environment and water consumption tariff to ensure sustainable use of ground water resource.

One of the evidences with this regard in Mongolia is a big difference in water consumption between the individuals living in apartments and ger districts (suburban areas). For instance, an individual living in an apartment uses 280-300 liters of water a day, while an individual living

in a ger district uses only 15-20 liters a day. It is evidence showing unsustainable use of water for some parts of city or town populations. The most applicable approach to restrict the unsustainable water use is to use economic or payment system. Thus, water users should have water meters in order to pay for their water consumption. This proposal and its supporting data were forwarded to the Aimag Citizen's Representative Khural for consideration. After months of negotiations and communications, the proposal was appreciated and accepted by the local decision makers and they decided to install water meters at all households, organizations, and business entities under a schedule and re-set water consumption tariffs based on survey results within this year. [Mongolia](#)

Buyant river's protected zone was defined and demarcated



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Buyant River running across a territory of Jargalant Soum of Khovd Aimag has been seriously polluted by improper human activities e.g. washing cars in the river and throwing household wastes along the river particularly in summering areas of local residents. Thus, it needs to define its conservation zone and adhere its conservation regime in order to eliminate this problem. The Basin Council presented the concern to the Water Authority along with Jargalant Soum Governor's Directive defined regular and special zones in a part of Buyant River running through Khovd town and started its demarcation. Demarcation has started from the areas resided by local communities in summer time and 46 awareness boards, where conservation regimes are cited have been built. It will be an important measure to eliminate the problem, provide more awareness on the river conservation to the public, adequate compliance of the conservation regimes, and reduction of the river pollution. [Mongolia](#)

Solid wastes thrown along Buyant River have been collected and removed



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One of the concerns to Buyant River basin is solid wastes thrown along the river. Thus, the task to organize public campaigns to collect and remove the wastes at least twice a year has been included in the basin management plan. According to the action plan, the campaign was organized along Buyant River involving economic entities, organizations, and individuals in Khovd town on June 14, 2012. Over 300 individuals participated in the campaign and over 30 tons of solid waste was collected and removed from the vicinity of Khovd town.

[Mongolia](#)

Chikhertei River basin was taken under the State protection



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Buyant River starts from Chikhertei and Deluun Rivers. Deluun River starts from Khukh Serkh Mountain range that is in the current State PA network so its conservation is adequate. As Chikhertei River basin or Chikhertei, Gants Mod, Tugrug, and Khuiten Rivers that create most of Buyant River run-off were taken under state protection under a category of National Park, it has provided a favorable condition for conservation of majority of the

areas, from which Buyant River run off is formed. The task to protect upper areas and delta of rivers through the Protected Area network is already stated in integrated water resource management plan for Khar Lake-Khovd River Basin and has come into practice. As the basin is taken under state protection, there are a number of advantages e.g. restriction of mining operations and unsustainable use of natural resources seen. [Mongolia](#)

Permanent water monitoring and analysis has been started



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Both “Shim Us” and “Suat” LLC those run sewage water treatment in Khovd and Ulgii towns have no appropriate laboratories and trained staffing to monitor or analyze in water supplied through the towns’ centralized water networks and the treated and discharged waste water into the nature. So it holds back to define whether Khovd and Ulgii town populations are supplied with safe drinking water and whether the sewage water is adequately treated and discharged into the nature. Thus, the River Basin Council has connected the companies

“Shimt Us” and “Suat” to the Sewage Water Management department. As a result of this effort, the parties signed a contract on regular monitoring & laboratory testing in water supplied to the towns’ residents and waste water discharged from the sewage network into the nature and started some proposed actions. It will provide a ground for introduction of technological renovation, provision of technical guidance and recommendations, and delivery of standard water supplies and treatment of sewage water in the towns. [Mongolia](#)

Rare Species

Snow leopard individuals were captured on motion-sensitive photo cameras

For monitoring and tracking snow leopard distribution and movements, three automatic photo cameras were placed on Bumbat Khairkhan Mountain and two cameras on Jargalant Khairkhan Mountain in participation of some local residents on January 24, 2011. These cameras were placed on the mountains to capture snow leopard movements and identify the areas, where the individuals inhabit. At nighttime of January 27, there were three individuals captured on the camera placed on Jargalant Khairkhan Mountain. There was also an individual recorded in the same area during nighttime of January 28 and February 28, 2012. However, the individuals did not come to this area from February 28 to April 24, 2012.

According to the observation findings, the snow leopard movements vary particularly on mountain tops, middle slopes, and bottoms. A camera was placed next to a cave on a mountain slope for a year around starting from March, 2011. During this period, there were four occurrence of snow leopard captured on the camera. As assumed the snow leopard would breed and inhabit in the cave, this area was selected and the camera was kept for a year. However, the snow leopard was captured on the camera only in November and December. Thus, this area and its vicinity are not inhabited by snow leopard in springs, summers, and autumns as per the observation findings. *Mongolia*

WWF received the first photo - evidence of the snow leopard in the Argut River basin in Altai (Russia). Chances for revival of Argut wild cat population are growing

In May snow leopard monitoring team in Altai Republic brought inspiring news after the expedition to Argut River basin. The camera-traps finally caught the images of a snow leopard that was considered almost extinct in the area. More than 50 images of a rare predator taken from different perspectives were studied by the experts.

It is obvious that two individuals of a snow leopard “posed” in front of the cameras. One of them was named Vita after Victor Samoilov, the member of monitoring team who tragically passed away this spring. The other one was named Hook because of the typical spot in the form of a hook (or a question mark) on a left side of the body.

These photo evidences bring hope to the experts that re-establishing of the snow leopard population in Argut is possible providing no poaching occurs in the area.

“This is striking news that several individuals of a snow leopard managed to survive despite intense snare poaching in Argut in 1990 ties and beginning of 2000 ties. It is crucial to focus our effort on resurrection of snow leopards in Argut valley because the habitat for the cat are one of the best in Russia. Prey species (Siberian ibex) are abandon, the landscape is favorable,” says **Sergey Spitsyn, the Head of Monitoring Team.**

Many researchers believed that the Argut River basin is the most optimal snow leopard habitat in Altai. The area used to be considered the habitat of up to 40 individuals of snow leopard. The conclusion was based on expert evaluations only. No robust research for snow leopard was done in Argut Watershed before 2004. To get more specific information a several months of photo-trapping was initiated by WWF in 2011. Unfortunately no tracks of a rare predator were found and no images were received. However lots of wire snares were removed in the cat habitats. WWF team concluded that the number of snow leopard dramatically decreased from the 90ties due to the intense poaching when wildlife protection was poor and not efficient.

Photo-trapping and anti-poaching in Argut valley is a joint project of WWF, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Altai Biosphere Nature Reserve and the Altay Project.

WWF and partners plan to obtain the precise data on the location and numbers of snow leopards in the Argut River valley to ensure the efficient conservation of the remains of the snow leopard’s group in the area. *Russia*



© WWF RUSSIA / S. SPITSYN. SNOW LEOPARD ON CHIKHACHEVA RIDGE, 2012

“IRVES-3” mobile anti-poaching unit has successfully completed its planned task



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“IRVES-3” anti-poaching unit conducted patrolling in Shijgt Canyon in a territory of Erdeneburen Soum of Khovd Aimag from April 20 to May 3. This practice takes place every spring for several years in a row. The unit scheduled the patrolling in the canyon for the period because grayling spawns within this period of time and the species is largely hunted by poachers. During the patrolling they prevented the illegal fishing by over 300 individuals coming from neighboring soums. The anti-poaching team imposed USD200 fines to 14 individuals and confiscated 32 sets of fishing rods and hooks from the poachers.

The anti-poaching unit also confiscated five fishing meshes, two guns “Dorbink” used for bird hunting, and one gun “TO3-8” caliber near Khovd River and handed over them to the police. The anti-poaching unit informed about the grayling spawning, which takes from April 15 to June 15, and fishing is prohibited within this period to the individuals. Although it was snowy, stormy and cold in the canyon during the patrolling, the anti-poaching unit “IRVES-3” could prevent the grayling from illegal fishing during its spawning. *Mongolia*

Fighting poaching in snow leopard and argali habitats of Russia



© WWF RUSSIA

For such accidents to happen as seldom as possible WWF provides the patrol teams with the spare parts for cars.

This Spring two patrol teams of Altai – Sayan were granted with cars for antipoaching raids. WWF received such fantastic gifts from Russian M-Video Equipment Company to ensure the effective patrolling of rare species habitat in Altai – Sayan.

UAZ cars, the most popular and appropriate Russian off-road vehicle, were delivered to the antipoaching “Irbis” brigade in the south of Krasnoyarsky Krai and the patrol brigade in Altai Republic. The cars were of great help in harsh landscapes and for the long distance of Altai – Sayan.

For rangers in Altai Republic spring was a relatively calm period. Hunting season was closed and wild ungulates were skinny after winter period. For three months the inspectors patrolled the area of 6 districts of Altai Republic with focus on the Sailyugem Ridge, Shavlinsky Refuge and the Argut River valley – the habitats of argali and snow leopard. The wardens inspected 31 herders’ yurts, 50 cars and 7 person, confiscated 15 guns (including 5 illegal), issued 20 protocols, removed 27 wires, discovered one case of illegally harvested roe deer.

This May snow leopard monitoring team spotted a poacher in the Chikhacheva Ridge in the border zone of Russia and Mongolia.

Six rifle shots troubled the mountain silence. The team called to border guards and the group of soldiers arrived in the problem area. Thanks to the joined and quick actions of the monitoring team and border guards the poacher was arrested. He was a dweller of a local village hunting ungulates in the border zone where all hunting is prohibited.

The populations of argali and snow leopard in Chikhacheva Ridge are threatened by poaching. Hunting should be totally diminished in the area to provide good conditions for the snow leopard. *Russia*



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The poacher arrested in Chikhacheva Ridge.

A story on a Snow leopard caught and released back by herders



Herdsmen Chuluunbaatar of Khamtiin khuch bag of Sharga sum of the Gobi-Altai aimag was looking on his binocular for his livestock around 7am of April 28, 2012 and has seen a snow leopard running in the middle of plain. He called neighboring herders Todkhuu, Nyamdavaa, Bazarragchaa, Enkhbaatar and Bandi, all come together discussed and decided to capture the snow leopard. Bazarragchaa stayed watching after the animal, Enkhbaatar went to take his little track and others gone to bring the rope.

Soon when the little track came in, the snow leopard went under the track and lay down. Herders captured the snow leopard with the rope and pulled up in the track.

Then the local administration and rangers were informed about the incident. Mr. B. Batsaikhan, head of the Saiga Rangers' Network and member of Irves-3 MAPU came to the site to convince herders to release the animal while being in constant consultation with WWF-Mongolia main office.

Early afternoon about 40 herders of 18 families came together in the ger of Todhuu with hope that they would be reimbursed their loss for snow leopard predation. Herders were constantly complaining local administration, aimag's nature & environment department and other organization about the losses of many cattle, but did not received any compensation yet.

Attitude of locals towards the snow leopard is negative as they claimed they don't benefit from this animal and they wanted to keep and feed the snow leopard until the loss is reimbursed. Some of herders menaced to kill the snow leopard if losses are not reimbursed.

At the end of meeting conservationists were able to agree with local herders to release snow leopard in the place where it was captured.

The little track with snow leopard came in steppe where it was captured, when opened the sides snow leopard did not move, even when herders tried to move it by long wooden stick snow leopard did not move. One of herders pulled with rope from neck of snow leopard and pulled down from the track on ground.

After that when people moved in distance snow leopard made walked some, then and laid down. People were looking on binocular, 2 birds fly down next to snow leopard. When the people walk to snow leopard, it was walking away, to the mountain, it continued until end of day. Next day checked at 6 am, no snow leopard was observed in that area, no livestock was attacked by snow leopard.

Mongolia

PHOTO: © WWF MONGOLIA



South-Western Tuva: co-existence of Herders and Snow Leopards is possible

The recent data obtained by snow leopard monitoring team in Tuva Republic (Russia) proves that the conditions for snow leopard in South-Western Tuva are favorable. For instance no tracks of snow leopard were found in Mongun-Taiga area in 2004-2006, but in 2011-2012 tracks of at least 3 leopards were registered here in 2012. Stable group of four leopards occupies Aspayty valley in Chikchacheva Ridge. Tsagaan-Shibetu Ridge hosted only 6 or 8 snow leopards in 2004 but obviously more than 10 in 2012.

Fantastic pictures of a snow leopard in South-Western Tuva were collected this spring during photo-trapping sessions of WWF and Ubsunurskaya Kotlovina Nature Reserve. A snow leopard looked right into the camera at daylight.

Above all Mongun – Taiginsky District of Tuva Republic is a place where the local people and researchers often meet snow leopard in the wild. In 2010 the female with the cubs were photographed by an ordinary photo-camera on Tsagaan-Shibetu Ridge. In 2011 the antipoaching team took the picture of a rare animal. This spring footage of a snow leopard was taken by a member of WWF monitoring team. Local people also tell the stories of seeing the animal or finding the tracks. However the herders still remain alerted or watchful towards snow leopards roaming around as their cattle stays in danger.

Thanks to WWF education and conservation projects most of local residents are aware of the snow leopard's Red book status and a hard punishment for its killing. Nevertheless as long as the goats and sheep remain the source of living for the people and the number of wild ungulates in the area is poor the spotty predator will remain the threat for the local communities.



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Cattle remains the main source of income for the herders of upland and remote areas of Tuva Republic. In fact snow leopard is known to be able to attack a big yak not only a goat or a sheep.

To mitigate conflicts between snow leopard and herders WWF experts involved local families in camera-trapping of snow leopards in Tsagan-Shibetu Ridge. In 2011-2012 very good pictures of local snow leopards were made, so now the researchers and local herders know the cats living beside their herding camps. Three families of herders agreed to protect and monitor their “own” snow leopards in frameworks of Save your Snow Leopard Program developing by WWF experts. First private donors are found to support this project and pay local families for saving snow leopards living on the herders’ pastures. *Russia*



© WWF RUSSIA / A. KUKSIN

A snow leopard recently captured by camera in Mongun- Taiga area of Tuva.

Forest

One million of conifers were planted this spring in Altai Republic



© WWF RUSSIA / A. BRUKHANOV

Young trees of spruce in Ust-Koksinsky District

310 ha of new forest were planted this spring in Altai Republic. Such is the present of WWF and Yves Rocher to the region. One million seedlings of spruce, Siberian pine and larch are supposed to replace the areas of former fires and clear-cuts.

This is not the first forest restoration project of WWF in Altai-Sayan. 10-year-long “Plant you Forest” Programme supported by members of WWF Russia was finished in 2010. It resulted in 1000 ha of new forest planted in Altaysky Krai including 20 ha planted with the support from Yves Rocher.

This year thanks to Yves Rocher and WWF Altai Republic received “green” million trees which makes up to 30% of the area annually planted with forest in the republic.

Thanks to professional work of Ministry of Forestry of Altai Republic the planting was finished right in time before it got too hot. The inspection of planting areas made by WWF experts revealed that acclimation level of young plants rated up to 100%. The plants have to be guarded carefully from forest fires, insects or other threats.

WWF and Yves Rocher plan to continue forest restoration in Altai Mountains. Half a million of Siberian pines are planned to be planted in autumn on-site of a tragic forest fire. [Russia](#)

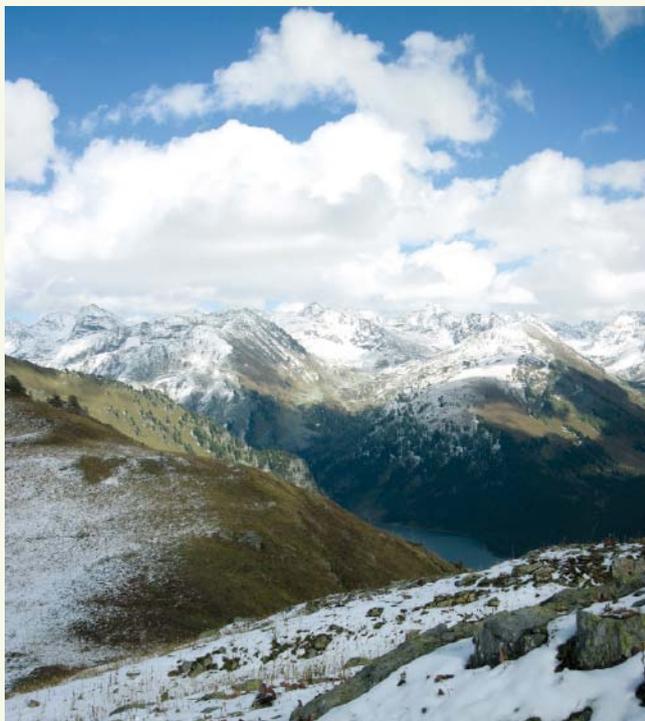


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Spruce forest in Ongudai District

Protected areas

GAP – Analyses of Protected Areas Network of Altai Republic is finalized



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The current network of PAs in Altai Republic comprises 52 PAs of federal and regional subordinate with total area in 22 sq. km. (22% of the region). It is one of the highest index in Russia. Nevertheless the existing net of PAs lacks for the efficiency due to low capacity and proficiency of governmental conservation bodies and insufficient ecosystems' representativeness.

In the frames of “*Protected Areas – For a Living Planet!*” Programme of WWF the team of experts under WWF surveillance and support worked out the Perspective Development Scheme of PAs for Altai Republic for the period up to 2020. The assessment was done using GAP-analyses methods. The specialists identified and mapped the areas that still lack for conservation status but crucial for conserving landscape diversity and biodiversity. Above all the existing net of PAs of Altai Republic was assessed and the ideas for improvement were suggested.

With the currently updated maps of Econet of Altai-Sayan the GAP-analyses are published for the wide range of experts and organizations.

Russia



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Community Development

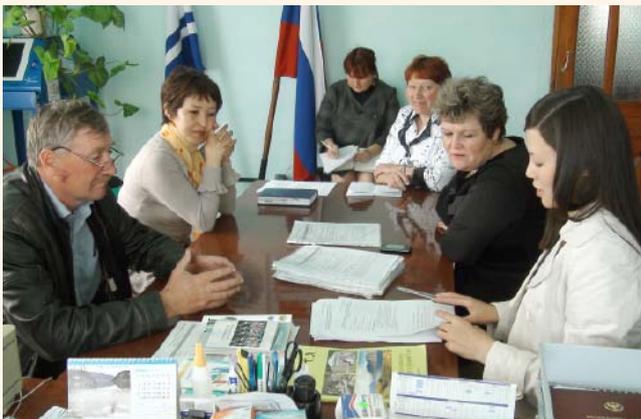
Adequate conservation of natural resources only allows sustainable uses



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The herder community “Saali Khuren” responsible for buffer zone of Tsagaan Shuvuut SPA in a territory of Sagil Soum of Uvs Aimag implements conservation activities within distribution areas of Argali sheep and wild onion (*Allium Altaicum*). The community members spread wild onion seeds over two hectares, where the wild onion is not grown, in 2012 as they planned. The area is guarded by the community members in shift. They are aiming to expand the distribution area of *Allium*, which is hardly found within their residential areas. If the species is grown in the areas after certain period of time, the land will be possessed by the community according to the environmental law and the community will have long term income sources as introduced and applied sustainable use of natural resources. In Uvs Aimag, one kilogram of wild onion (*Allium Altaicum*) is sold at USD 2.5. *Russia*

Small Business for Altai Biodiversity



© WWF RUSSIA / KATUNSKY NATURE RESERVE

The micro-credits commission consists of experts and respected leaders. Ust-Koksinsky District of Altai – Republic.

Small Business for Altai Biodiversity Program in Altai Republic was implemented by WWF with support of Citi Foundation in 2011. The Programme was aimed to provide the local dwellers with the knowledge, skills and finance for developing small business enterprises as the alternative to the traditional source of income (hunting, fishing, plants harvesting). The Programme in 2011 resulted in supporting 30 projects from local people. All projects were evaluated as sustainable by experts of the Assistance for Biodiversity Fund, (local NGO, the Programme’s implementer in Altai Republic). Fifty nine new jobs for local communities were organized; total cost of goods produced by new businesses in September-December 2011 was 751,000 rubles (\$25,000).

In 2012 WWF and Citi Foundation announced the start of the second phase of the Programme to reduce poverty in biodiversity rich regions with high level of unemployment – Land of Snow Leopard Homestay Program. The people living in snow leopard and argali habitats will receive the financial and informational support for development of homestay programme for tourist coming to Altai. This year the form of financial support was changed from grants to micro-loans (credits).



© WWF RUSSIA / L. IVASHKINA

Ecotourism is rapidly developing in Mountain Altai (Russia). Homestays and tourism is practically the only alternative perspective for villagers. Appropriate business skills and initial capital is a good kick-up for a business beginners.

By June 2012 forty applications for micro-credits received from local people were granted. The total budget of micro-loans amounts up to \$60,000. The financial mechanism for the effective money circulation was worked out by the experts to ensure the money repayment (return). The villagers applied for such business initiatives as homestays development, souvenirs making, catering, ecotrails constructions etc.

Russia

Environmental units' data and information has been compiled into a database

Compilation and entering of data and information of local communities and environmental units running in Altai-Sayan Mongolia part into database has been completed.

According to the database reports, there are totally 148 communities and groups including 46 forest communities in 78 environmental units & communities, one part-

nership of artisanal and small scale miners, 23 herder communities recorded in Khovd, Uvs, Gob-Altai, and Bayan-ulgii Aimag. These communities and groups are all actively running their operations as being responsible for 1.127.225 ha. The 148 communities and groups have a total of around 13000USD mutual fund.

Mongolia

The pastureland management plan will soon be approved

In recent time, when numbers of livestock are increased every year, it inevitably needs to address and apply the most optimal approach to ensure sustainable pastureland use. Under this task, Govi-altai Aimag pastureland working group organized herders' meeting-workshop on providing recommendations on draft pastureland management plans in May, 2012. The participants were presented with the progress of working group performances and shared their comments to the working group. Moreover, grouped 17

Soums into three parts, the working group reviewed (3-8 times) and finalized the draft pastureland management plans of 16 Soums except for Biger and Delger Soums. Prior to discussion of the draft management plans by respective Soums' Governor's Councils and Citizen's Representative Khurals, they provided additional source materials to the government officials and officers. If any challenges and obstacles are not met, the draft pastureland plans will soon be approved.

Mongolia



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Community based hunting management is being introduced in practice



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In last spring, members of herder communities "Argalt Kharig" and "Uureg Nuur" of Sagil Soum of Uvs Aimag carried out the biotechnical measures e.g. putting saltlicks to wildlife at USD800 expenses. This effort was funded from the incomes collected from the special permit hunting management into a locally protected area's "Argali Conservation Fund". According to the Fund charter, 25 per cent of the incomes should be spent for wildlife habitat conservation and restoration and 40 per cent for improvement of the communities' performances. Thus, the communities spent some parts of the incomes earned from the community based hunting management for wildlife conservation.

Mongolia

Public awareness

Land of Snow Leopard Festival doubled the number of participants



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From its start (2010) the *Land of Snow Leopard* Festival was organized to create awareness on snow leopard conservation in Altai – Sayan, highlight the conservation work being done for this endangered cat in the region. Festival activities ranged from contests for schools including poems, songs, posters, craft-works, face-art, drawings, drama, exhibitions and educational talks. Altai and Tuva Republics of Russia are the key participants of the event as the key habitats of snow leopard in Russia. However the neighbor regions announced their wish to join the event.

This year the eco– event organized by WWF and several partners received even greater support than ever. The number of participants doubled from 1000 of 2011 to 2000 person in 2012. New partners and participants joined the Festival in Tuva Republic. The gala-concert of the event was held in the tuvian capital Kyzyl City this June. In 2012 Government of Altai Republic officially declared the support to land of Snow Leopard Festival. “*We love snow leopard and will support its conservation*”, stressed the **vice-governor of Altai Republic Yury Antarodonov**.

The final gala-concert of the festival will be traditionally held in the capital of Altai Republic – Gorno-Altai City in September. It will be an international event with the guests from the countries of snow leopard home range – Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, “*Land of Snow Leopard is a bright event and a good conservation awareness idea. We’d love to have the same event in Mongolia*”, says **Mantai Khavilkhan, the Director of Directorate of PAs of Mongolian Altai**. [Russia](#)

International Biodiversity Day celebrated by Media-Club of Eco-Journalists in Altai Republic



WWF RUSSIA / L. IVASHKINA

Media-Club of Eco-Journalists at field monitoring on Biodiversity Day.



WWF RUSSIA / L. IVASHKINA

The pine being planted by the members of Media-Club and Altai PAs.



WWF RUSSIA / L. IVASHKINA

Communication in such diverse Ecoregion as Altai – Sayan in Russia is close to communication in several different countries. For last two years WWF chose the tactics of building a constant group (or a net) of WWF loyal and professional journalists through establishing Media-Clubs. This tool is proved to be one of the most effective in Far East Branch of WWF Russia.

Identifying inspired journalists who are friendly to nature conservation, educating and teaching them nature conservation issues to turn into loyal to WWF persons was the challenge of 2010 – 2012. Eco Media-Club was established in Altai Republic to inspire the journalists in 2010. The Club members were granted with exclusive interviews, photos, media trips regarding WWF projects. As a result of Media Club organization WWF presence in regional media grew up by 29% in 2011-2012. WWF appearance in regional TV programs increased twice.

This spring celebrating International Biodiversity Day in Altai Republic was one of the brightest events of the year for WWF and Media-Club. The idea was taken after Geo Magazine. The member of Eco Media-Club along with the staff of PAs spent a day on an open air trying to identify as more plants and animals' species as possible. More than 60 species of plants were found by the amateurs in the area of Altai Botanical Garden. The journalists had practical lectures on field monitoring, biodiversity from the professional rangers and scientists. All members of Media-Club were inspired by being a conservationist for a day, plunging into the atmosphere of nature conservation and field-work. A symbolic planting of pines was chosen as closing event of the Day. The pine in the name of Media-Club of Altai Eco-Journalists was planted in Botanical Garden.

WWF Altai – Sayan Programme intends to share the experience of Media – Clubs in Altai for Tuva Republic with focus on educating media through workshops, field meetings and press-tours to get more professional and effective cover of conservation issues. [Russia](#)

Kids say YES for a living planet

Summer gathering of eco-clubs in the western region was held on June 22-27, 2012. This event was organized under the slogan “For a Living Planet” and devoted to the 20th anniversary of WWF Mongolia Programme office.

It was a five-day event attended by 183 school children and 56 teachers and instructors. This was a major event for eco clubs awaited whole year and has been extended involving Zavkhan aimag’s kids. In addition to the secondary school children and teachers, the event was attended by the university and college students, who were group leaders, and the teachers of Zavkhan Aimag Scout Association, who were moderators. “Nomadic Nature Trunk” programme training was organized for teachers and instructors. Divided into five sections, the teachers taught what they have learned to four groups. It was highly appreciated by teachers and children. As kids were given home works to learn by heart the WWF’s cognitive books, debates were organized on “Wonders of Mountain Steppe”, “Wonders of High Mountain”, “Wonders of Desert Steppe”, “Water Values”, and “Takhi” books. It was quite useful for improved awareness among the participants and audiences. Moreover, a contest “AHA” (“Questions & Answers”) included 180 ecological ques-

tions was organized. All the questions were correctly answered by about 90 % of the participants without exclusion. Thus, additional questions with different topics were asked and winners were selected. Other contests e.g. the contest “Primitive Community Living”, where children prepared their food and meals from the nature and the contest “Expressions of nature, environment, and love in sounds” were quite interesting and motivating for the participants. The children participated in this summer gathering were very happy with organization of all the event activities, where they were divided into groups, had their own mottos, and competed, and the preparation work, where they read many books and prepared dramas for 5-10 days prior to coming to the summer camp. The event organization was very specific and successful as the Soums’ teachers were responsible for training process and the group leaders were responsible for children as teachers and instructors said.

Mongolia



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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planets' nature environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature

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